

South Dakota National Guard

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

June 14, 2017

Soldiers deliver timber to support reservation communities

By Spc. Rebecca Glidden - 129th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

CUSTER, S.D. – For 10 years, the timber haul humanitarian mission has been an important part of the Golden Coyote training exercise. The mission provides National Guard and Reserve Soldiers an opportunity to gain valuable training experience and provide a service to Native American tribal communities throughout South Dakota.

That support continues this year as units transport timber to the Pine Ridge, Rosebud, Standing Rock, Cheyenne River and Crow Creek Reservations from June 12-20.

“It’s amazing to be able to help the Native American reservations and the state of South Dakota,” said Sgt. Mitchell May, team leader, 137th Transportation Company, Kansas National Guard. “Back home, I’m turning a wrench or fixing someone’s car, but here I’m doing an even bigger job and it makes you feel a part of something.”

Members of the South Dakota National Guard’s 200th Engineer Company used hydraulic excavators to load timber onto trucks to be transported by exercise units serving with the 821st Transportation Battalion, U.S. Army Reserve. Hauling lumber is an opportunity for the Soldiers to train for their state and federal missions.

“In a real-life scenario, hauling lumber is a big thing,” said May. “We are the National Guard and natural disasters are a big part of our job. We could be hauling anything from lumber to water, medical equipment, and even ammunition when we are overseas. This is really beneficial for our unit’s readiness.”

For these Soldiers, the timber haul required them to drive on unfamiliar roads in a convoy to complete their missions at four different sites on the Pine Ridge and Rosebud Reservations. The timber helps provide residents with wood for heating, construction, and ceremonial purposes.

“We make good use of the wood for building arbors for our pow wows, but mainly for firewood,” said Ivis Long Visitor, who works for the Oglala Sioux Tribe District Service Center. “This makes it easier for our people to keep warm during the wintertime.”

The timber transported to the Native American communities not only benefits the residents, but also provides a unique training opportunity for many units.

“Overall, this is a real-life experience for a great cause,” said Capt. Michael Van Horn, commander of the 1138th Transportation Company, Missouri National Guard. “It’s beneficial to work with other units and get to take our trucks off-road. We don’t have anything like this in Missouri, it is great for building the skills of our drivers.”

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High-resolution photos are available at www.flickr.com/photos/southdakotationalguard



170612-A-UC938-0014: Soldiers of the 137th Transportation Company, Kansas Army National Guard, and 200th Engineer Company, South Dakota Army National Guard, load Palletized Load System trucks for timber haul operations in support of the Golden Coyote training exercise, near Custer, S.D., June 12, 2017. The Golden Coyote exercise is a three-phase, scenario-driven exercise conducted in the Black Hills of South Dakota and Wyoming, which enables commanders to focus on mission essential task requirements, warrior tasks and battle drills. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Mitchell Murphy)



170612-A-DN645-0004: Soldiers of the 137th Transportation Company, Kansas Army National Guard, and 200th Engineer Company, South Dakota Army National Guard, strap down timber in support of the timber haul operation for the Golden Coyote training exercise, near Custer, S.D., June 13, 2017. The Golden Coyote exercise is a three-phase, scenario-driven exercise conducted in the Black Hills of South Dakota and Wyoming, which enables commanders to focus on mission essential task requirements, warrior tasks and drills. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Robert West)



170612-A-DN645-0005: U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Andrew Kennedy, 200th Engineer Company, South Dakota Army National Guard, saws off excess timber in support of the timber haul mission for the Golden Coyote training exercise, near Custer S.D., June 13, 2017. The Golden Coyote exercise is a three-phase, scenario-driven exercise conducted in the Black Hills of South Dakota and Wyoming, which enables commanders to focus on mission essential task requirements, warrior tasks and drills. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Robert West)



170613-A-DN645-0006: Soldiers of the 137th Transportation Company, Kansas Army National Guard, stage along a road to unload timber in support of the timber haul operation for the Golden Coyote exercise, near Red Shirt, S.D., June 13, 2017. The Golden Coyote exercise is a three-phase, scenario-driven exercise conducted in the Black Hills of South Dakota and Wyoming, which enables commanders to focus on mission essential task requirements, warrior tasks and drills. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Robert West)



170613-A-UC938-0009: Soldiers of the 137th Transportation Company, Kansas Army National Guard, unload timber on the Pine Ridge Reservation in support of the Golden Coyote training exercise, near Red Shirt, S.D. June 12, 2017. The Golden Coyote training exercise is a three-phase, scenario-driven exercise conducted in the Black Hills of South Dakota and Wyoming, which enables commanders to focus on mission essential task requirements, warrior tasks and battle drills. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Mitchell Murphy)



170613-A-DN645-0024: Soldiers of the 137th Transportation Company, Kansas Army National Guard, unload timber on the Pine Ridge Reservation in support of the Golden Coyote training exercise, near Red Shirt, S.D. June 12, 2017. The Golden Coyote training exercise is a three-phase, scenario-driven exercise conducted in the Black Hills of South Dakota and Wyoming, which enables commanders to focus on mission essential task requirements, warrior tasks and battle drills. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Robert West)

FOR MORE INFORMATION, please contact the SDNG Public Affairs Office at (605) 737-6721 or e-mail ng.sd.sdarng.list.pao@mail.mil